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AUTHOR Murphy, Sharon; Estrada, Paula
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ABSTRACT

The reading list and assignments in this study guide are designed to involve high school students in examining the media from a nonwhite perspective. The beginning assignments require students to assemble their own bibliography relating to minority groups in the media, to examine the lives and contributions of specific Chicano, black, and American Indian news writers; and to assess the minority group stereotypes conveyed in print. Other assignments involve the evaluation of minority images in television and motion picture presentations, an examination of media treatment of the artistic contributions of nonwhite persons, and content comparisons of minority newspapers. The final project consists of an exhibit that uses some form of the media to publicize the research findings of the class. (MAI)

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Minority Images: A Project Guide

Sharon Murphy
Paula Estrada

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The following few pages offer ideas of what might be done at the secondary school level to commemorate both the 10th anniversary of the Kerner Report, and the 150th anniversary of the birth of the first black paper in the U.S., Freedom's Journal on March 16, 1977 and the coming 150th anniversary of the birth of the first American Indian newspaper, the Cherokee Phoenix, February 21, 1978.

As such, this simple project guide offers not a manual, not a lesson plan, but ideas for readings and proposed assignments, designed with student involvement in mind. It is expected that each teacher must, in the actual working out of the projects, tailor them to individual student groups in individual settings.

The projects suggested here are not, in the main, reading and study exercises collected into one book. An effort toward that end was made with Murphy's Other Voices, published in 1971 and used with success by high school teachers in many parts of the country.

The user will note that plenty of space has been allowed for marginal notations, additions, etc. It is hoped that this project guide, product of one writer's many years with minority young people and of another writer's experience as a minority student and anticipation of working with young people, will be provocative of further ideas. In that spirit it has been prepared.

Sharon Murphy is head of the undergraduate program, Department of Mass Communication, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Paula Estrada is an undergraduate student in the department, and assisted in the paper as part of a course in Mass Media and Publications in Schools, Summer, 1977.

CS204647

Minority Images in the Media
A Project Guide

This study guide suggests ways of looking at the media from non-white perspectives. It starts by suggesting research into early Chicano, black and Indian journalism. Then it moves into the area of entertainment, and finally into advertising. It suggests readings and in-person interviews with individuals working in or involved with both the majority (white) and minority (non-white) media. Students are urged to probe the backgrounds of these individuals, finding out how they got into the business and how they deal with the issue of minority representation.

Beginning reading list: The Black Press, U.S.A., Roland Wolseley, Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1971.

Other Voices: Black, Chicano and American Indian Press, Sharon Murphy, Dayton: Pflaum/Standard, 1974

The Only Good Indian: The Hollywood Gospel, by Ralph Friar and Natasha Friar, New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1972.

La Raza: The Mexican Americans, Stan Steiner, New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1970

Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, introduction by Tom Wicker, New York: Bantam Books, 1968, esp. Chapter 15.

Sample Assignment #1: Bibliographies

Divide the class into research teams. Using the beginning reading list as a starter, develop as extensive as possible a list of print or other titles relating to mass media and one minority group. Many additional titles will be found in the bibliographies of these books. Add other non-white minorities as these represent interests in

the class. Use Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, and other such guides and indexes as are available in the school and/or local library. Lists can then be combined and a master list compiled, for use in the class and by other classes and student groups. (This assignment can also be used to teach bibliographic skills in preparation for term-paper writing.)

Sample Assignment #2: Spotlight - DuBois

One of the most prolific early black writers, W.E.B. DuBois, turned out books, pamphlets, and articles of all kinds, many of them protesting the conditions of Blacks in the United States. His Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States appeared in 1896 when he was 24, and was the first scientific historical monograph by an American black person. It was followed three years later by the Philadelphia Negro. A Social Study, written while DuBois was an assistant instructor in sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. After he submitted several articles to Dial, Atlantic Monthly, World's Work, and others, he gathered his best essays into a 1903 book, The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches. The book, an American classic, is still widely read.

Write a three to four page paper documenting the life of W.E.B. DuBois and his journalistic Accomplishments.

Sample assignment #3: Spotlight - Boudinot

In 1828, a young college graduate, Elias Boudinot, returned home to begin a newspaper which was to become one of the most treasured collections in the library of the British Museum in London. Boudinot, a Cherokee Indian, was the first editor of the Cherokee Advocate, a paper published in English and in the Cherokee language using an alphabet designed by a crippled Cherokee silversmith. The Cherokee Phoenix was the first of many publications by Cherokee Indians, and its brilliant and inspired editor set the tone for the editors to come. He fought injustice while he used the paper to teach his fellow Cherokees.

Write a three to four page paper documenting the life of Elias Boudinot and his work.

Sample Assignment #4: Spotlight: Sequoyah

Sequoyah, a Cherokee silversmith, designed an alphabet for the Cherokee language which made it possible for the entire Cherokee Nation to become literate in a very short time. His syllabary also made possible the first of many newspapers in Indian country, as well as millions of pages of text materials published by the Cherokee Nation. Sequoyah did not write books, but he is written about in many. Write three or four pages on the life and contribution of Sequoyah.

Sample Assignment #5: Who's Who in the Non-White Press in the U.S.?

Select one of the following individuals or another of your choice. Write several paragraphs describing that individual's impact on minority images held at the time she/he was working:

Charles Chestnutt
Elias Boudinot
Rupert Costo
Ida Wells Barnett
James Bland
Paul Laurence Dunbar
Jeannette Henry
Vine Deloria, Jr.
Jack Johnson
Scott Momaday
Marie Potts
William P. Ross
Henry Ossawa Tanner
William Monroe Trotter
Mary Church Terrell
Booker T. Washington
Bert Williams

Sample Assignment #6: Minority Images in the White Media. Prepare a list, based on the Friar book, the Kerner Report, discussion in class, and other sources, of stereotypes you would expect to find in movies about or involving particular minority groups.

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Study a library copy of Life Magazine from the 1930's or 40's. What type of images are projected? How are minority members described, photographed, quoted?

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Watch carefully for television reruns of movies depicting Indians. In teams watch the movies, noting how many times the categories you listed are represented.

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Write a short paper, or prepare a class presentation on one of the following, using white and non-white sources:

The Harlem Renaissance
The Red Summer
The NAACP
The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (1916)
Martin Luther King's March on Washington, D.C.
Adam Clayton Powell
Custer's Last Stand
Chief Crazy Horse
Wounded Knee, 1891
Wounded Knee, 1973
National Congress of American Indians
Caesar Chavez
Reuben Salazaar
National Farmers Organization Proposition 14 (California)

Sample Assignment #7: The Arts in America

There have been numerous articles on the non-white press discussing the artistic contributions of non-white Americans. Pick two artists from the list below, or select others, and compare their treatment in white and non-white media. Use verbal or graphic examples.

Bessie Smith
Marie Tallchief
Jose Feliciano
Duke Ellington
Buffy St. Marie
Tony Orlando
Paul Robeson
Chief Dan George
Freddie Prinze
Marion Anderson
Will Sampson
Josephine Baker
Charles Drew, M.D.
Duke Red Bird

Sample Assignment #8: Looking at the Future

Following viewing of Black History, Lost, Stolen or Strayed, narrated by Bill Cosby in the 60's, be prepared to discuss images past, present and future in films today. Find other films which explore the ethnic heritage of other non-white minorities, and which, after viewing, you would recommend for other groups.

Sample Assignment #9: Minorities from a Minority Perspective

Prepare a documentary or the plan for a documentary on any subject pertaining to the needs of the minority community you choose. It could be politics you select, religion, education, etc. Give each team member an assignment, with possible jobs being photographer, reporter, writer, typist, audio specialist, etc. Make use of audio tape, class camera, telephone, media and city library. Narrow the topic so that you can tell something significant about it, within the amount of time you have for the project. The completed documentary or script or plan must give evidence of careful consideration of issues covered in preceding assignments.

Sample Assignment #10: Television and Minorities

Break up the television viewing weekend into time blocks and assign each student or group of students a time block for a three week period. Adapt and add to the set of criteria used in assignment #6 to describe the currently aired images of minorities in TV news and entertainment, with students supplying specific percentages and examples of their findings.

If possible, submit these findings to local television management for discussion.

Sample Assignment #11: Print Images Today

Find examples and then discuss current images in selected or assigned newspapers, brochures and magazines. If possible, submit these findings to the editors of the publications for discussion.

Sample Assignment #12: Content Comparisons

Select two black newspapers, two Chicano newspapers, or two American Indian newspapers.

Summarize the news events carried in two consecutive issues of each publication. Discuss whether or not the bulk of these stories would, in the estimation of the class, be likely to be covered by white media. Which ones would not have been? Why not? If possible, arrange a class interview with the editor of one of the publications, to find out how she/he interprets their conclusions.

Sample Assignment #13: Final Project

In teams, prepare an exhibit showing media contributions of Blacks, Chicanos and American Indians over the past 150 years. It might be planned for general school display, or presentation, and scheduled for late February, near the anniversary on February 21 of the establishment of the first American Indian newspaper in

1828; or for mid-March near March 16, the anniversary of the founding of the first black newspaper in 1827; or near the anniversary of the founding of the first Chicano paper in 1963.

It might be summarized into an article for the school paper or a program on the school broadcast outlet.